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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) – PROVISION OF IN-KIND ASSISTANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OF APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION GRANT FOR MEGAPOP FIBER OPTIC INTERNET BACKBONE RING, NESHOPA, NEWTON, AND LAUDERDALE COUNTIES, MISSISSIPPI

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and TVA's implementing procedures, Environmental Policy and Planning has prepared the attached EA and determined that the potential environmental consequences of TVA's action have been addressed. We conclude that the proposed action of allowing the use of part of TVA's fiber optic system for internet access and administering a \$2,000,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant for installation of 40 miles of in-ground fiber optic cable for internet access is not a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. Thus, an environmental impact statement is not required. The EA describes the proposed action and potential environmental impacts in more detail.

Based on the methods to be used to install the fiber optic cable and the line route proposed by MEGAPOP, all potential impacts are expected to be insignificant and no effect on any federally-listed endangered or threatened species is expected. Planned avoidance of sensitive resources through use of directional boring, the avoidance of the identified wetlands near the project, and the use of routine construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will help to ensure that any potential impacts are minor and insignificant. BMPs used will be those described in *A Guide for Environmental Protection and Best Management Practices for Tennessee Valley Authority Transmission Construction and Maintenance Activities (revised)*, Technical Note TVA/LR/NRM 92/1 or their equivalent. MEGAPOP will be required to ensure that its contractor adheres to these mitigation measures.

As noted in the attached EA, it is possible that TVA will be asked to assist with the installation of subsidiary fiber optic lines connected to the regional loop. Based on the analysis in the EA, TVA has determined that as a category such projects would normally not result in significant environmental impacts and qualify as categorical exclusions, subject to certain conditions that are identified in the EA. Accordingly, subsidiary fiber optic lines connected to the proposed regional loop would not require preparation of EAs or EISs.

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Paper copies of the EA and this FONSI will be retained in TVA's NEPA documents file. An electronic version of this documentation will be stored in the Electronic Document Management System.

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Jon M. Loney, Manager
NEPA Administration
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PKS:CPN:TMH

Attachment

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EDMS, SP 1D-C (Attachment)

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MEGAPOP FONSI.doc